

Traditionally, Americans and Asians have very different ideas about love and marriage. Americans believe in “romantic” marriage - a boy and a girl are attracted to each other, fall in love, and decide to marry each other. Asians, on the other hand, believe in “contractual” marriage - the parents of the bride and the groom decide on the marriage; and love - if it ever develops - is supposed to follow marriage, not precede it.

To show the differences, a survey was conducted among American, Chinese and Indian students to determine their attitudes toward love and marriage. Below is a summary of each group’s responses to the four key values.

Physical attractiveness: The Americans are much more concerned than the Indians and the Chinese with physical attractiveness when choosing a wife or a husband. They also agree that a wife should maintain her beauty and appearance after marriage.

Confiding: Few Asian students agree with the American students’ view that wives and husbands share all thoughts. In fact, a majority of Indians and Chinese think it is better and wiser for a couple not to share certain thoughts. A large number of Indian men agree that it is unwise to confide in their wives.

Partnership of equals: The majority of Asian students reject the American view that marriage is a partnership of equals. Many Indian students agree that a woman has to sacrifice more in a marriage than a man.

Trust built on love: Significantly, more Asian students than American students agree that a husband is obliged to tell his wife where he has been if he comes home late. The Asian wife can demand a record of her husband’s activities. The American wife, however, trusts her husband to do the right thing because he loves her not because he has to.

The comparison of the four values suggests that young Asians are not as romantic as their American counterparts.

Answer the questions:

1. What are the four key values in the survey?

2. Who are much more concerned with physical attractiveness when choosing a wife or a husband, the young Americans or the young Asians?

3. What are the Indian students' attitudes on a partnership of equals?

4. Why does the wife trust her husband trust their husband to do the right thing?

5. What is the main finding of the survey?
